



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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AUG 19 2010

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senator
8 Third Street East
Kalispell, MT 59901

Dear Senator Baucus:

Thank you for your letter of August 2, 2010, to Libby Asbestos Site Team Leader Victor Ketellapper on behalf of Ms. Josie Fisher of Troy. Ms. Fisher wrote to you concerning EPA's cleanup of her home to address asbestos contamination. I appreciate this opportunity to provide the following information in response to Ms. Fisher's concerns.

The clean-up team arrived at Ms. Fisher's home on July 20, 2010. The cleanup consisted of the removal of vermiculite insulation from the attic. Since access to the attic was available from the exterior of the home, entry into the living space was not necessary for the clean-up team. During removal of the vermiculite insulation, a vacuum system was operated in the attic. The vacuum system prevents any dust generated from the removal from entering into the living space of the home. Air is pulled out of the attic by the negative air vacuum system and the dust either settles out in the collection chamber or on filters.

On July 28, Ms. Fisher's home was cleared for her to move back in. Clearance samples were taken in the attic to assure the cleanup had removed all asbestos from the attic. Clearance sample results from the attic were all non-detect for asbestos. Clearance samples were not taken in the living areas of the home, since the clean-up operations were confined to the attic.

Upon returning to her home, Ms. Fisher stated that she noticed dust throughout the home and was concerned that the dust may have contained asbestos. She immediately notified EPA's community involvement coordinator assigned to her cleanup. Based on Ms. Fisher's concerns, EPA decided to conduct a full interior cleanup of her home's entire living space.

Prior to cleaning, EPA did not collect dust samples within the home. The decision to not sample was based on: 1) a history of inconsistent asbestos analyses when analyzing dust samples at the Libby Asbestos Superfund site; and 2) the fact that an interior cleaning would be conducted regardless of the outcome of the sample results.


During the interior cleaning, all horizontal and vertical surfaces were HEPA vacuumed and/or wet wiped to remove contaminated dust. Clothes in the closets were laundered. All upholstery items (e.g., drapes, bedspreads, couches, and carpets) were thoroughly cleaned with a

HEPA vacuum. Upon completion of the interior cleaning, air sampling was conducted in the living space of the home. During the air sampling, blowers are used to cause any dust remaining in the home to become airborne. The clearance air sampling did not detect any asbestos in the home. Thus, on August 3, 2010, EPA advised Ms. Fisher that she could return to her home.

Ms. Fisher decided that she would not return home, since she was concerned that asbestos could still be in her couch or carpets. She requested that EPA replace her couch and professionally shampoo her carpets. On August 6, 2010, EPA explained to Ms. Fisher that because the interior of her home met project clearance criteria for asbestos, we would not be able to replace her couch or professionally shampoo her carpets.

We appreciate your continued interest in EPA's clean-up actions in Libby and Troy, and I hope this information will be useful in your response to Ms. Fisher. If you or your staff would like additional information, please contact me or Sandy Fells, Regional Congressional Liaison, at 303-312-6604 or fells.sandy@epa.gov.

Sincerely,


James B. Martin
Regional Administrator

